

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 were originally filed in the present application. In response to the previous restriction requirement, claims 1-12 are currently canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 23-26 are also currently added. Accordingly, claims 13-26 are currently pending in the application.

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Notice of Right to Petition Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.144

Since the Examiner has now made a final requirement for restriction, despite Applicants' earlier arguments against the same, despite Applicants' request for vacation of further restriction and imposition of species election, and despite Applicants' formal request herein for reconsideration, Applicants hereby give constructive notice of their right to petition the final holding of restriction to the Group Director pursuant to 37 C. F. R. § 1.144. As provided by the Rule, Applicants currently defer petition until after final action or allowance of the claims provisionally elected.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102, Claims 13-22

Claim 13

Claim 13 recites:

13. A virtual fab comprising:
a design database including design information for designing semiconductor devices;
a network coupled to the design database and adapted to communicate with a customer; and
a design coordination engine, coupled to the network, to track changes in the design information that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device for the customer.

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Torres. However, the PTO provides in MPEP §2131 that, to anticipate a claim, a reference must teach every element of the claim. Therefore, to sustain this rejection with respect to claim 13, Torres must contain all of the above elements of claim 13. However, Torres does not disclose a design

coordination engine, coupled to the network, to track changes in the design information that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device for the customer, as recited in claim 13.

The Examiner states on page 3 of the Office Action that, “[t]he design information shared and tracked by partners must include changes in the design information (transistor data for their new films, processes and new materials) that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device (transistors) for the customer.” However, contrary to the Examiner’s position, Torres actually fails to disclose tracking changes in the design information that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device for the customer. That is, in contrast to the Examiner’s allegation, Torres merely discloses that when a transistor lot is ordered by a customer, SEMATECH will process the lot and send it to other facilities to add process steps that are not available at SEMATECH. (Torres, pg. 222, second column).

Furthermore, and also in contrast to the Examiner’s position, Torres merely discloses that the tracking functionality of the Virtual Fab allows the partners to track wafers and access final electrical test data: “The Virtual Fab concept provides the capability to take a wafer from substrate to functional transistors and/or other IC components without the boundaries of one geographical location. For unique or developmental processes and tools not available in the ATDF, the wafers may travel both nationally and internationally to universities, suppliers, national labs, and/or SEMATECH Member Companies for unique processing and then returned to SEMATECH for final processing and electrical testing....” As the wafers travel through the Virtual Fab, Torres merely allows users to track the location of wafers and access final electrical test data through the World Wide Web, but fails to allow users to also track design information changes. (See Torres, pg. 223, second column).

Thus, for at least the reasons set forth above, Torres fails to teach **tracking changes in the design information that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device for the customer**, as recited in claim 13. Accordingly, the §102 rejection of claim 13 is not supported by Torres. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 13 and its dependent claims.

New Claims 23-25

New claim 23 and its dependent claims 24 and 25 are also not anticipated by Torres because Torres fails to disclose a virtual fab comprising:

- a design database including design information for designing semiconductor devices;
- a network coupled to the design database and configured to communicate with a customer; and
- a design coordination engine coupled to the network and configured to track changes in the design information that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device for the customer, wherein the design coordination engine includes:
 - a tracking module configured to determine whether the customer has accessed the design database during a predetermined time period;
 - an alert module configured to alert the customer if a change in design information occurred during the predetermined time period; and
 - an appraisal module.

New Claim 26

New claim 26 is also not anticipated by Torres because Torres fails to disclose a virtual fab comprising:

- a design database including design information for designing semiconductor devices, wherein the design database includes:
 - a design building block sub-database;
 - an associated technology sub-database; and
 - a customer design profile sub-database;
- a network coupled to the design database and configured to communicate with a customer; and
- a design coordination engine coupled to the network and configured to track changes in the design information that impact the manufacture of a semiconductor device for the customer, wherein the design coordination engine includes:

- a tracking module configured to determine whether the customer has accessed the design database during a predetermined time period;
 - an alert module configured to alert the customer if a change in design information occurred during the predetermined time period; and
 - an appraisal module;
- wherein the design information is configured to be accessed by the customer via the design database to design a semiconductor device;
- wherein the design coordination engine is configured to determine the latest time that the customer has accessed design information that has been changed; and
- wherein the alert module is configured to verify that the customer has not previously been alerted of the same design information change.

Conclusion

All matters set forth in the Office Action have been addressed. It is clear from all of the foregoing that independent claims 13, 23 and 26 are in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 14-22 depend from and further limit independent claim 13 and dependent claims 24 and 25 depend from and further limit independent claim 23, and therefore, are allowable as well. Accordingly, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance.

An early formal notice of allowance of claims 13-26 is requested. Should the Examiner deem that an interview with Applicants' undersigned attorney would expedite consideration, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



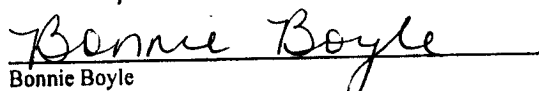
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